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Inaugural Dissertation

On

Dyspepsia

By James L. Mayhew of
Virginia

1727. Jan. 1. 1727.
D. 1. 1727.

The first of January 1727.
I have the honor to receive
your letter of the 27th inst.
and in answer to inform you
that the same has been
sent to the proper authorities
for their consideration.
I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. B. 1727.

Dyspepsia.

This disease, from its great prevalence and difficulty of management, becomes a subject of great interest to all who embark in medical science. It has its seat in the stomach, and so important an office does that viscus hold in the animal economy, and so extensive are its sympathies with other parts, that it cannot be affected for any length of time, without involving the whole system, in more or less derangement. Consequently the dyspeptic, though in no immediate danger, continues to linger out an existence frequently so wretched that death is preferable. This disease is of much more frequent occurrence than formerly, especially in the southern states. Half a century ago, it was rarely found

except among the aged and decrepit, but the present generation hardly arrive at adult age, before they are visited by this malady.

Its increased prevalence may be accounted for, from the greater luxury of living and indolence of habit, which obtains almost every where.

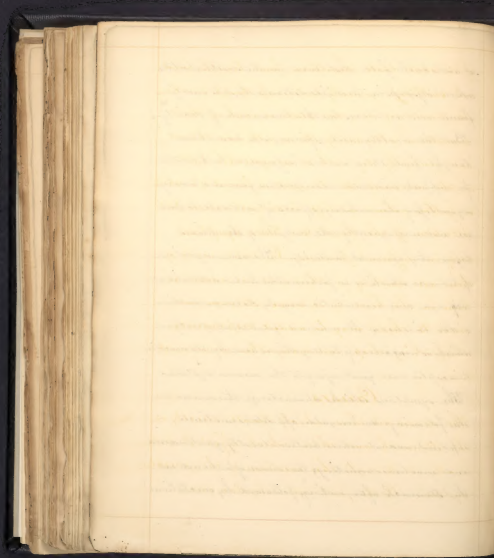
Man, in an uncivilized state, insured to hardship and danger, having his body invigorated by active exercise and nourished by the most simple diet, is less susceptible to the exciting causes of disease, but as he becomes refined so does he also become luxurious and effeminate in his habits, the vigour of the natural constitution becomes impaired and less able to resist the causes of disease. This is peculiarly the case in the southern states.

Much of it may be ascribed to the relaxing effect of a warm climate, but more perhaps to the influence of slave populations, or the manners and customs of the white inhabitants, for it is

a remarkable fact, that, even in the southern states, where dyspepsia prevails extensively, it is rarely found among slaves, or the lower order of society.

But the wealthy and refined, who have been taught from their earliest infancy to look to others for support, and have indulged in ease and luxury, are less liable to the salutary effects of moderate labour, are not unfrequently the subjects of the disease before they arrive at maturity. The extravagant use of tobacco which is a fashionable habit with almost every age, may contribute largely to the production of this disease. It wastes a great deal of caloric which is necessary to digestion, and by its narcotic principles does great injury to the nervous system.

The symptoms which characterize this disease are the following. An irregular appetite, sometimes deficient, and at others preternaturally great; nausea and sometimes vomiting; the sense of a load on the stomach after eating, followed by eructations



of an acid taste; heartburn; foul breath; habitual chilliness; generally costiveness, though sometimes the bowels are in a lax state, or each of these conditions alternately: the mouth and throat are generally dry with a disagreeable taste; in the morning the tongue is furred of a white or yellow colour; vertigo, indistinct vision, palpitation of the heart &c. These symptoms vary in different persons. In some, many of them are wanting in others more are added, as pain in the head, optic ^{nerve}, sternum and side; to these may be added despondency, unrefreshing sleep and many other nervous symptoms.

CAUSES

The causes are those which operate directly on the stomach and those which affect it indirectly or through the medium of the general system. Of the first - and irregular and

improper diet, the use of too large portions of warm drink, as tea, Coffee &c, excessive use of spirituous liquors, fasting in the day, and overloading the stomach just before going to bed, want of due mastication of the food. Those which operate indirectly are an indolent inactive life, intense study, grief, anxiety of mind, and inordinate passions of any kind, immoderate rising and imprudent exposure to cold and moisture. In fine whatever disturbs or impairs the nervous system particularly or produces derangement in any of the important functions of the body may produce the disease. It is often a symptomatic affection arising from derangements in the Liver, Spleen, Pancreas &c

Treatment

Two diseases are found more difficult of management than this. It arises from so many



different causes and those causes operating on such various peculiarities of constitution that scarcely ever with the same mode of treatment be found applicable to any two cases.

It is only by a rigid perseverance in a regular plan of treatment adapted to the particular case, that we can hope for success and such is often times the impatience of the patient that it is almost impossible to induce him to adhere to any course sufficiently long to experience its beneficial effects. The privations to which he is subjected are frequently great and painful. Daily temptations assail him and so little danger is apprehended from a small indulgence in those habits which he had so long practised with seeming impunity, that he is sometimes induced to lay aside his regimen, and by one imprudent indulgence to destroy the effect of all the preceding treatment.



Thus after the lapse of many months the Physician has the mortification to find, no improvement in the condition of his patient, and recovery as distant as ever.

In directing the cure, three indications are presented.

- 1st To avoid or remove the exciting causes.
- 2^d To relieve such symptomatic affections as tend to aggravate it.
- 3^d To restore tone to the Stomach and invigorate the general system.

To fulfil the first indication a careful examination into the history of the case should be made to ascertain whether it be idiopathic or symptomatic and whatever has produced it should be carefully avoided.

If it has been induced by intemperance the patient must forsake his vicious habits, if by intemperate application to subjects which



required great mental exertion, the mind must be relaxed by lighter studies.

For the 2^d indication we have to remove the undigested matter that may be in the stomach. This is done by an emetic, or gentle cathartic. The emetic is in most cases preferable, as it not only removes the contents of the stomach, but it makes a strong impression upon that viscus, which aids in breaking the chain of morbid actions, and renders it more easily operable on by other remedies. Ipecacuanha alone or combined with a small portion of Tart-~~emetic~~ answers well. Next, the bowels are to be gently opened by some mild laxative, as Rhubarb or Rhubarb and magnesia, and kept constantly in a soluble state. Drastic purgatives are always injurious and should be avoided. Prepared charcoal is a remedy which I have found very useful in this disease; it



operates kindly as a laxative, and at the same time corrects that unpleasant taste in the mouth and the foetid breath which is frequent by very annoying to the patient.

It is of much importance to prevent costiveness which is often a troublesome symptom, in order to aid the effect of laxatives in establishing a regular evacuation, the patient should make daily efforts at particular times, by observing great regularity and perseverance in these efforts the most obstinate constipations are sometimes removed without the aid of medicine and when not equal to the task themselves, are great auxiliaries.

Acidity of the Stomach is frequently a very disagreeable affection. This may be relieved by alkalis and absorbents as lime water or lime water and new milk; a table spoon full of each repeated *pro re nata*. Magnesia



sub carb soda prepared chalk. When there is
cardialgia with vomiting soda powder may
be given but if it continues obstinate a blister
should be applied over the stomach.

Gastralgia is another symptom which some
times causes great suffering to the patient.
The remedies for this are opium either or but
what appears to be preferable to all is the oxide
of bismuth, given in doses of five or six grains,
3 or 4 times in the day. It may be relieved
also by distending the stomach with warm
water. Palpitation of the heart, if troublesome,
may require antispasmodics or opium either
oil of amber and musk.

Dyspepsia or water brash is an affection which
sometimes occurs though rarely in this coun-
try. It is said by some to arise from penu-
rions diet and also from the consumption
of salt meat. probably this may be the case



in Scotland and some parts of Europe.
when it prevails extensively, but in this
country it seems to arise from no peculiar
cause. It appears to consist in a morbid
secretion from the coats of the stomach,
and the quantity of fluid sometimes vomited
by the patient is almost incredible. It is
generally most troublesome in the morning,
and gradually wears off as the day advances.
An emetic is generally given first, followed up
by alkalis and cutaneous preparations. The
oxyde of bismuth has much reputation in
this affection, and also combinations of kina and
opium. When there is much spasm attending
it, opium, ^{or} the Tincture, oil of amber &c are
useful. But these symptomatic affections
as heartburn, palpitation of the heart, Gas
trudynia &c should not be regarded unless
they are very great and troublesome as the



remedies given for their relief are generally such as produce no good effect towards the ultimate recovery of the digestive powers. at best they only procure temporary relief and often interfere with more important remedies hereafter to be mentioned. so that the physician must prescribe them sparingly and weigh in his own mind whether the symptoms for which he uses them if suffered to continue will do more injury than the medicines given for their relief.

The last indication i.e. to give tone to the stomach and invigorate the general habit, is to be fulfilled by tonics, as Pow. Bark, Colomba, Quassia, Gentian, Mineral acids and mineral preparations generally.

The preparations of iron either the carbonate or muriated tincture answers best in a majority of cases, as an aid to the remedies



The cold bath is frequently of service if there is sufficient vigour of body to produce reaction; but if this should not follow, it will be pernicious. Gentle exercise on horse back should be taken daily, in fair weather, it has a much better effect if there be some other object or inducement than the benefit of health: therefore hunting or travelling a long journey by which the mind is kept agreeably occupied and diverted from the disease is the best mode in which exercise can be taken. In fact the mind of the patient requires very particular attention and every means should be used to keep it cheerful and actively engaged, in some useful and agreeable employment. Idleness is a source of the disease, while industry is one of its best antidotes. It sometimes happens that Dyspepsia will



not yield to the course of remedies laid down above, and will require for its amendment a thorough but gradual alteration of the whole system. With this view mercury given in alterative doses becomes necessary: the blue pill at night purged off the next morning with Lee Sulph and magnesia answers a good purpose. This remedy if persisted in for some time gradually changes the condition of the stomach and breaks the chain of morbid actions which continue the disease.

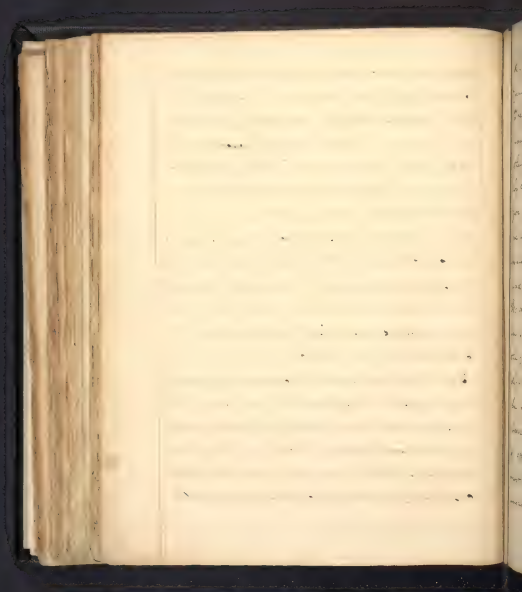
A strict adherence to a well regulated diet is indispensable in the management of this disease and little indeed will all our efforts avail if this be not attended to, with for a constant diet is perhaps preferable to any other article it should be used while new and before it becomes at all sour



owing to a peculiarity of habit some patients cannot use it at first without complaining of its effects but by persevering it is generally found in a short time to agree perfectly well. If milk cannot be obtained, chocolate is the best substitute prepared so as to deprive it of its oily part.

The bread of dyspeptic persons should be cracken or cold loaf bread: but toine toast is improper, and indeed all kinds of warm bread should be prohibited. Tea and coffee are also injurious and should not be drank.

The Dinners should consist of young and fresh beef, mutton, and tender fowls, oysters, and lean ham: very few vegetables are admissible except Rice and the Irish Potatoe. Pork, real, old fowls, pies, puddings, custards, breadings, ice cream, and all



kinds of dessert are improper, as also meats.
Fruits of all kinds, except ripe peaches.
The meals should be taken at regular
hours, and made as simple as possible;
the stomach should never be ~~offended~~
by compounding several articles together,
for although each if taken alone would
be perfectly digestible and harmless, yet
when mixed together they would produce
bad effects.

No drink should ^{be allowed} except water and that
in small quantities; much of it dilutes
the gastric juice, and thereby impedes
digestion. But some allowance must
be made for habit: if the patient has
been accustomed to use large portions
of spirituous liquor a small indulgence
must be allowed him at first, gradually dim-
inishing the quantity until it may be safely



discontinued. Warm and comfortable clothing is very important. As there is a close sympathy existing between the skin and stomach any impression made upon the former is soon extended to the latter; therefore it is necessary to protect it from the influence of cold and keep up a certain excitement on it by wearing flannel, particularly in the winter season.

The feet should be well protected from cold and moisture, by wearing worsted stockings and if that is not sufficient they should be dusted with cayenne pepper.

After recovery, the Patient is always liable to a return of the disease by exposure to the same causes which originally produced it. He should

therefore continue through life to avoid
all the exciting causes of the disease, and
abandon forever those habits which
his former experience has taught him
to be prejudicial to his health.

In fine he should become a new
creature, and will in the end have
little to regret, if the scourges which
his former vices have received shall
have the effect of rendering him a
more industrious frugal and virtuous
Citizen.

